

Submarine meets perfin: which collection does it belong in?

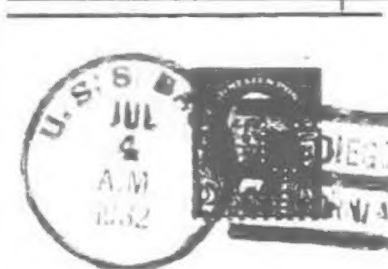
By John Lyding (#116L)

Like most philatelists, I have several collections. In fact, my wife has told me more than once that I have to get rid of that "junk." Once in a while, I manage to acquire something that fits into more than one compilation. This can become complicated by the relative value in each category.

Note the Naval cover at right. It was canceled on the USS BASS SS-164 on Independence Day 1932. Now, while not rare, pre-World War II submarine covers are not easy to come by.

Consider the BASS. She was launched as V-2, on 27 December 1924, by the Portsmouth Navy Yard and commissioned there in December 1925. Assigned to Submarine Division 20, the boat operated along the East Coast of the U.S. and in the Caribbean until late in 1927 when SubDiv 20 was moved to San Diego. On July 1, 1931, just a year prior to the cover shown above, the submarine was renamed USS BASS and assigned hull number SS-164. BASS operated in the Pacific until she was decommissioned and placed in reserve on June 9, 1937.

The boat was recommissioned in 1940 and served in the Atlantic until November 1941 when she was assigned to SubDiv 31, Coco Solo, Canal Zone. BASS sub-



sequently made four war-patrols in the Pacific until a fire broke out in the after battery, after torpedo room, and starboard main motor in August 1942. After repairs at Philadelphia Navy Yard, the boat operated out of New London, CT, until she was taken out of commission for the last time on March 3, 1945.

The cover and perfin have some characteristics in common: both of them are pre-World War II and while the perfin isn't rare, its not all that easy to find either.

In the USCS Catalog this postmark is listed as "5hks 1931.....A". That breaks down to: **5** ...Type 5 postmark; **h** ...Entire design in

heavier lines than usual; **k** ...Type 5 postmark with dashes absent from bottom of dial; **1931** date of earliest known use; **A** ... common postmark.

The "common postmark" is defined as "postmarks that were (or still are) in use for a long period of time, and which can exist in large quantities. This applies to most postmarks issued since 1930, when collectors began sending for them in large numbers."

There are six NY/T perfins shown in the perfins catalog. Hence, the perfin on the cover should match one of the illustrations, all of which are attributed to the New York Title &

Mortgage Company. N205.1 does not have any control holes and the remaining five patterns have control holes (the extra hole between the letters "N" and "Y").

Would that this were the A-rated N205.1.7; however, a simple comparison discloses that our perfin lacks a control hole and therefore we have the base pattern N205.1 which is listed as being used from 1926 through 1933.

Now, this perfin is rated as C+ which means that there are between 41 and 80 copies known.

We have no way of knowing if this is a purloined stamp or a legitimate use. After all, the Long Island Railroad only takes 42 minutes from New York's Penn Station to Baldwin on Long Island. It's less than two miles from there to Freeport. So, the stamp might have been used by one of the company's principals or owner as well as a clerk to assist his hobby.

In any event, this use of a perfin put me on the horns of a dilemma—which collection does the cover fit into?

